PUBLIC MEETING

Before Gina L. Smith, Certified Court Reporter

At the Sue Reynolds Elementary School

3840 Wrightsboro Road, Augusta, Georgia

On October 20, 2011, Commencing at 6:12 p.m.

APPEARANCES

Board of Elections:

Ad Hoc Reapportionment

Presenting Guest:

Committee Members:

Ms. Lynn Bailey

Rep. Quincy Murphy

Rep. Wayne Howard

Comm. Alvin Mason

Comm. Bill Lockett

Comm. Jerry Brigham

Mr. Marion Barnes

Mr. Jack Padgett

Ms. Venus Cain

Mr. Grady Smith

Ms. Linda Meggers

Consultant

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1	AD HOC REAPPORTIONMENT PUBLIC MEETING
2	[Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 9-11-28(d), Augusta West
3	Reporting has no contract with any of the parties or
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5	usual and customary charges for services within the
6	industry and are available upon request by either
7	party, with no financial or services discount being
8	given to any party named in this litigation.]
9	MR. MASON: I'm going to go ahead and call the
10	meeting to order. At your earliest convenience
11	testing, testing. Can you hear me? At your earliest
12	convenience if you would, just come on forward and have
13	a seat when you have an opportunity. First and
14	foremost, we are grateful that you came out tonight to
15	be a part of the final public hearing that we have on
16	the originally proposed maps, and we appreciate you
17	coming out.
18	First and foremost, I'm Alvin Mason. I'm the
19	commissioner of District 4 but I'm also the committee
20	chairman of the ad hoc redistricting committee. And I
21	would just like to at this particular time ensure that
22	we know who's a part of this committee and who's here
23	tonight. To my right I have Grady Smith, Super-
24	district 10 commissioner and also committee member. I
25	also have Mr. Bill Lockett right here, commissioner of

- 1 District 5, and to my left I have our Honorable
- 2 Representative, State Representative Quincy Murphy. Is
- 3 it 120 right now? It may change futuristically. It's
- 4 120 in this area. I also have Ms. Venus Cain a Super-
- 5 district 9 board member from the Richmond County School
- 6 Board. I have my commission colleague, Mr. Jerry
- 7 Brigham from District 7, commission District 7, and we
- 8 have Marion Williams--Williams, I don't want to go
- 9 there. Mr. Marion Barnes, school board extraordinaire
- 10 for District 1, and we have Mr. Jack Padgett who is
- 11 also the vice-chairman of this ad hoc committee and he
- 12 is also the board member for District 6. And we also
- 13 have several school board representatives in the house.
- 14 I think I see Ms. Barbara Pulliam. Ms. Patsy Scott is
- 15 here also. And we're just appreciative of having
- 16 everyone here.
- Our statement of purpose for being here. We're
- 18 here because of the census of 2010. Everyone should
- 19 have received at some point a census form in the mail
- 20 last year. You were to fill it out for your household.
- 21 And this information that came back was based on the
- 22 census information that was received. If you chose not
- 23 to send in census information, you were not counted in
- 24 this count, so this information is only good as the
- information that was sent in from each household.

1 What the census data told us is that we basically 2 had a little over 200,000 residents in Richmond County, 3 a little over 200,000. Now, our districts are broken 4 up unto eight districts to include two super-districts, 5 which is a combination of the eight districts. 6 within those eight districts the ideal size would be 7 25,000, just a little over 25,000 in each district. 8 8 times 25, 200,000. That's how we get that. 9 So why are we here. Some of the districts that we 10 currently have divided up under the current way that it 11 is, we have some districts that have less than 25,000 12 individuals and we have some districts that have more 13 than 25,000, and then we have one district, District 7, 14 Mr. Brigham's district and Mr. Dolan's is right at the 15 25,000 mark. So what we have to do is break the 16 districts up equally as much as we can with a deviation 17 of less than five percent either way. And we've chosen 18 as a committee to look at two percent as our guide. if there is a district, for instance, District 1, needs 19 some 4,000 individuals. District 3 needs to lose some 20 21 4,000 individuals to get to the ideal 25,000 mark. 22 what we have to do is redistrict so that we can get 23 25,000 or so in each district. And there's some rules 2.4 and guidelines that we have to adhere to in order to be 25 able to get there. And some of the guidelines, and Ms.

- 1 Meggers will explain this a little bit more in detail,
- 2 is that we have to be sure that we're meeting the
- 3 standards of the Department of Justice as well as the
- 4 Voters Rights Act, section 5 of the Voters Rights Act,
- 5 which protects the minority vote and the African-
- 6 American vote. We cannot regress those particular
- 7 areas by a certain percentage. So from that standpoint
- 8 you also have to look at the fact that if you live in
- 9 District 1, let's have an example, wherever you need or
- 10 have to lose some individuals, you must be what's
- 11 called contiguous to another district. In other words,
- 12 District 1 does not touch District 4, my district. And
- 13 although I have to lose about 3,000, I can't give them
- 14 to District 1 because we don't touch, okay. Now,
- 15 District 1 does touch District 8, which has to lose
- 16 1800. District 1 touches District 3 and District 1
- 17 touches District 2. But part of the other criteria is
- 18 because we have to try to keep like communities,
- 19 District 3, although they have to lose individuals and
- 20 District 1, although they have to gain, they don't have
- 21 the same demographics. So let me break that down,
- 22 District 3 being predominantly white, District 1 being
- 23 predominantly black, we can't pull from District 3 even
- 24 though District 3 has to lose and District 1 has to
- 25 gain. We can't pull from them because they're not like

- 1 communities and that would retrogress or regress the
- 2 black vote. So we're not going to do that. Where we
- 3 have to pull from, for instance, would be District 2,
- 4 but District 2 also has to gain and so what you're
- 5 going to see is a snowball effect. One has to pull
- 6 from another district and then one district has to pull
- 7 from another and you begin the snowball effect, and
- 8 that's what considered redistricting.
- 9 So I just gave you in a nutshell a synopsis of
- 10 what we have to do. These committee members that have
- 11 been assigned or elected or appointed by the
- 12 Commission, the School Board, and the Legislative
- delegation, our job is to insure that the process is
- 14 fair and meets the Department of Justice guidelines and
- 15 that we meet the deviations, that we do not regress or
- 16 retrogress the districts, especially as it relates to
- 17 the minority vote. That's what's protected under the
- 18 Voter's Rights Act of section 5. Some people say well,
- 19 how come we're not protecting the white vote. It's not
- 20 a minority vote. So minorities are considered African-
- 21 American, or language issues such as Spanish or French
- 22 or that sort of thing. So when you look at it from
- 23 that standpoint, that's what we're looking at and
- 24 that's why we're here tonight.
- 25 Based on the previous two public meetings that

- 1 we've had, well, our initial committee meeting we
- 2 brought up some situations and some ideas of what we
- 3 thought would help out and Linda Meggers who you'll
- 4 hear from in a minute is our guru as far as
- 5 redistricting and having the software and stuff to make
- 6 that happen based upon the guidelines that have been
- 7 given to us and put down by the Federal, the State and
- 8 here locally. So from that we drew a map which is what
- 9 you see out there and tonight and what we've done in
- 10 the previous other two public meetings, we're asking
- 11 for public input. We want to hear from you and the
- 12 Department of Justice also wants to know that we gave
- 13 the public an opportunity to be a part of the process.
- 14 So tonight we're not really here to debate any
- 15 situation or get into a back and forth dialogue, but
- 16 what we are here to do is to hear from you after the
- 17 presentation any concerns or issues that you may have
- 18 as it relates to redistricting.
- And here's what I would ask that you do. We have
- one mic here in the center of the room and if you have
- 21 a question as we're going through the presentation, if
- 22 you can remember it, that's great, if you can't, write
- 23 it down so that at the appropriate time when we open up
- 24 the floor for questions you can begin to line up at the
- 25 mic and we will address your questions and try to see

- 1 if we can't address it at that particular time or bring
- 2 it into our next committee meeting for discussions.
- 3 So, having said that, that's kind of how we want
- 4 to do our format. We've already introduced our
- 5 committee members. We know our statement of purpose,
- 6 why we're here, that's to hear from you on the
- 7 redistricting process. So at this point before we move
- 8 forward, what are your questions about anything that
- 9 I've covered so far?
- [No response]
- 11 MR. MASON: Great. At this time I would also like
- 12 to thank our Board of Elections director, Ms. Lynn
- 13 Bailey. She is the one that's been responsible for a
- 14 lot of the administrative work that goes along with
- 15 this and the set-ups and bringing our recorder.
- 16 Where--oh, she's in front of me. She's here as well.
- 17 And we thank her and her staff for making that happen.
- 18 Also, the funds to pay for the redistricting consultant
- 19 also came from the Board of Elections funds. This
- 20 committee was not given any funds in which to operate
- 21 so we appreciate the Board of Elections for bringing in
- 22 someone on our behalf to be able to help assist us with
- 23 this process.
- Now, without further ado I would like to go ahead
- 25 and introduce Ms. Linda Meggers. She is our

- 1 redistricting consultant. She has come out of
- 2 retirement. She has done this all over the state for
- 3 many, many years and she is the expert, the guru, if
- 4 you will, of redistricting, the resident expert, and we
- 5 would like to introduce her at this particular time.
- And, Linda, it's all yours to give the
- 7 presentation as you would like. And then later on at
- 8 some point we will open up for questions.
- 9 MS. MEGGERS: Thank you, Mr. Mason. Every time he
- 10 calls me the guru I feel like I need to have some kind
- of swami hat on or something. Good evening. To give
- 12 you a little bit of background before we get into the
- 13 actual boundary lines and discussing those and the
- 14 working plan, is that as Mr. Mason explained, we need
- 15 to do this after every decennial census to check the
- 16 numbers to be sure that districts are approximately or
- 17 equal in population for equal representation, or as the
- 18 terminology goes, one person, one vote. And that idea
- 19 and standard kind of has come down through a period of
- 20 years but basically it hasn't really been used that
- 21 much at a local level until the early '60s, and in many
- 22 areas in Georgia not until into the '80s that you
- 23 really started seeing these kinds of meetings and
- 24 districts being drawn with the members and districts
- and we had to review this.

1	The history behind that, of course, started with
2	the congressional districts where the Constitution
3	mandates that the congressional districts be based on
4	population based on the results of a decennial census
5	that's taken every 10 years. For decades you never
6	heard much done because Congress fixed the problems of
7	inequality of population by simply adding congressmen
8	after each census to compensate for the growth in the
9	country and the new states, et cetera. And they kept
10	adding states until they got to the 435 and it was
11	they decided enough was enough and they went to a
12	formula to allocate congressional seats based on
13	population and fixed it at that particular number.
14	Now, the standard for congressional is equal
15	population. They want zero deviation in these
16	districts and that's because the congressional district
17	size is based on trying to equalize all congressional
18	districts across the country, so that if we keep the
19	zero deviation, then approximately a congressional
20	district in the state of Washington will be about the
21	same size as one in South Carolina as one in Florida or
22	Georgia. So they hold us to that zero deviation. But
23	over a period of time we needed some guidance at the
24	local level, and the legislative branch came under
25	scrutiny first and in Georgia particularly the county

1 unit system is -- a lot of you in this room are probably old enough to remember that and a lot of you are too 2 3 young to know what I'm talking about. But that was 4 struck down and Georgia was told we needed to count 5 people and not pine trees in south Georgia. But along 6 with that we needed some standards about what equal 7 population was going to be and it wasn't as practical 8 to hold to zero deviation when it came to local 9 redistricting. So the courts after a lot of discussion 10 and ideas presented by various interested parties came up with some ideas and standards. They said as long as 11 the legislative and the local level you keep to a plus 12 13 five or a minus five percent deviation over the average 14 size, we're going to accept that. So five percent over 15 25,000 in this case for Richmond County or five percent below that, we're going to accept that you've met your 16 17 burden of one person, one vote and we're going to allow 18 you that five percent for these reasons. First of all, we have to use census geography. And you'll hear the 19 20 term if you got really involved in the process and we 21 start talking about census blocks. And I know what you're going to think. In your head you're just like 22 me when I first heard that and we--I grew up in a city 23 2.4 so a block was a city block, a square, a rectangle or 25 something like that. In census terminology when you

1 get outside the city it's whatever geographical area 2 they can bound on all sides by a physical feature. 3 in some areas that gets to be pretty strange looking. 4 So when you're saying blocks is what they are is the 5 only thing you can use and sometimes there's no way to 6 rearrange the blocks so you can get to zero and have 7 something that you can hold an election on that voters 8 can understand. Secondly, we're going to allow you 9 that five percent because there's going to be some good 10 redistricting principles that you want to follow that's going to take you over zero deviation. For example, as 11 12 you redistrict you may want to pay attention to your voting precinct lines and try to keep those intact in 13 14 order to minimize confusion among voters as to who 15 their representative is. Or if to get down under the 16 five percent you have to split a precinct you might 17 want to be able to stay on a major physical feature 18 that everybody recognizes that they live east or west of that line or north of south, et cetera, maybe a 19 creek or a railroad. So they're going to allow us that 20 21 larger deviation. 22 The second legal requirement, as Mr. Mason 23 mentioned, is the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as it has 2.4 been amended over the decades. And what really we're 25 faced with and what we look at during redistricting in

- 1 Georgia is really section 5 of that of the Voting
- 2 Rights Act. And it says, first of all, that no plan
- 3 that is adopted by the commission school board and
- 4 passed by the legislature as a local bill can be
- 5 implemented. We can't hold an election on this plan
- 6 until it's been reviewed by the Justice Department and
- 7 pre-cleared, saying that it has no negative effect on
- 8 minority voting power as it stands on the old plan. So
- 9 section five, non-retrogression. So we're going to
- 10 send a plan up there, they're going to look at the
- 11 minority percentages district by district and they're
- 12 going to compare that to the new plan that we send. So
- 13 they're looking at the present plan, the 2010 numbers
- on that plan, and they're going to look at the new plan
- 15 that's adopted to see that all those numbers are about
- 16 the same. Now, they don't have to be the exact same
- 17 number but if they are an effective majority-minority
- 18 district, those districts need to be maintained and if
- 19 not we have to answer why.
- So with that idea and the instruction that they
- 21 would like to keep instead of that plus or minus five
- 22 to make every effort to keep the deviations as close to
- 23 two percent for a working plan, they ask for a working
- 24 plan to begin the discussions, to bring to the public
- 25 to get your input before they went back and made

- 1 modifications to something that they could take to the
- 2 school board and commission. So that's what we're
- 3 going to look at tonight is the working plan that they
- 4 have first looked at. And it--I think it meets the
- 5 quidelines they gave us and where I've had to split up
- 6 trying to use some major features. So let's just go
- 7 and look at this a little bit more in detail.
- 8 As Mr. Mason commented, District 1 under the 2010
- 9 census, the existing district, is a minus 17 percent,
- 10 which is about 4200 people. It's the biggest negative
- in the plan. The second district that's the most short
- of population is District 2 which is now minus 11
- 13 percent, which is 2700. And then the next two
- 14 districts, 3 and 4, are the two largest districts.
- 15 District 3 being the very largest. It's almost--it's
- 16 plus 19 percent. It's almost a fifth of a district
- 17 over. And it's--which is about 2700 people. And
- 18 then--I'm sorry. District 3 is plus 19 percent which
- 19 is 4800 people. I misspoke. District 4 is the next
- 20 largest and it's a plus 13 percent which is 3200
- 21 people. And the rest of the districts were--District 5
- 22 was minus 1700; District 6 was a minus 2000; and
- 23 District 8 was a plus 2000. District 7 is the only one
- 24 that basically is so close in numbers that it could
- 25 remain unchanged. It's a plus 600 people which is a

- 1 2.41 deviation. Now, remember I said that plus or
- 2 minus five percent over, that's an overall ten. Well,
- 3 your plan, the existing commission school board
- 4 districts vary from a minus 17 percent to a plus 19
- 5 percent which is an overall 36 percent deviation range,
- 6 which—so they had to be addressed.
- 7 So let's look in here. I'm going to turn off a
- 8 little bit of stuff to make it a little bit easier for
- 9 you to see.
- MR. MASON: While she's doing that, if you didn't
- 11 get a--back on the table as you came in there's some
- 12 data sheets and maps and things like that. So that
- 13 kind of references what she's talking about. Back in
- 14 the back where you see the map, there's still some if
- 15 you need to get one, you can do that and it can
- 16 probably help you to follow along as well.
- MS. MEGGERS: Okay. As we look at the map, these
- 18 heavy dark lines that you see, those are your existing
- 19 district boundaries. They make it more easy to quickly
- 20 identify the areas that moved. So in this instance for
- 21 District 1, it was the one remember that was the
- 22 biggest shortfall. Not trying to upset the balance, I
- 23 was trying to stay away from 3 for a while, I took out
- of District 2 precincts 205 and 206. That was exactly
- 25 what was needed to fix District 1 for numbers. And so

- 1 the new District 1 under this one is a minus 2.29
- 2 percent or just basically a little less than 600
- 3 people. District 2 remember was already short so I
- 4 made it even shorter with that change. So it had lost
- 5 these two precincts. I went into District 5 to make up
- 6 the shortfall from here, so I picked up in District 5
- 7 precincts 504 and 508 and 507. So they took three
- 8 precincts here and then District 2 then becomes a minus
- 9 1.57 percent or about 400 people.
- 10 MR. LOCKETT: Ms. Meggers, I don't know, I think
- 11 this might be the appropriate time for you to mention
- 12 wherever there are incumbents that they must be
- 13 considered.
- MS. MEGGERS: All right. That's a good point.
- 15 Thank you. One of the most frequently asked questions
- 16 that come up during redistricting concerns incumbents
- 17 and protecting incumbents. The Georgia law requires
- 18 that we only legally have to protect those incumbents
- 19 that still have time left on their term. For example,
- in this instance, if you have -- we're going to put this
- 21 plan into effect with the 2012 election. You have some
- 22 school board members and commission members whose term
- 23 is not over until 2014. Those folks have to be able to
- 24 finish their term. We cannot shorten it. So they
- 25 become protected. We cannot put two of them together,

- 1 et cetera. On the other hand, we do not have to
- 2 protect the other incumbents where their term is
- 3 expiring in 2012. So you could put somebody from 2012
- 4 whose term is expiring in with somebody whose term does
- 5 not expire until 2014 and that person whose term is
- 6 expiring in 2012 could not run. They would have to
- 7 wait two years and run against the other incumbent,
- 8 okay. Or you can put two incumbents together who both
- 9 of their terms expired in 2012. They would both be
- 10 called the incumbent in that district and they would
- 11 have to run against each other. Now, as a routine
- 12 matter, as I began working on a working plan and a
- working proposal for our commissioner/school board, I
- 14 tried to keep all the present incumbents in their
- 15 districts as a beginning point regardless of when their
- 16 term expires. And as things develop and if we have to
- 17 change the plan then the committee will take that into
- 18 consideration. This plan, working plan, keeps all the
- 19 existing incumbents both commission and school board,
- 20 regardless of when their term expires, in the district
- 21 that they presently reside.
- Okay. So 2. District 3 was the one that was the
- 23 biggest overage. At this point I have taken out
- 24 precincts 309 and 310 to balance 3. Remember, 3 is the
- 25 biggest overage in population. And that takes care of

- 1 5.
- 2 MR. MASON: Linda.
- 3 MS. MEGGERS: Yes.
- 4 MR. MASON: Can you give the numbers. I know you
- 5 gave the precincts 504, 507 and 508 that went from 5 to
- 6 2. Is that--
- 7 MS. MEGGERS: Yes, I will. Thank you.
- 8 MR. MASON: If you could give the numbers for
- 9 that.
- 10 MS. MEGGERS: You mean precinct numbers or-
- 11 precinct numbers. Okay. In the working plan, the
- 12 precincts that went from 5 to 2 are precincts 509,
- 13 503--I'm sorry. I was looking in the wrong place.
- 14 504, 508 and 507 went from 5 to 2. 504, 507, and 508.
- 15 And then in District 3 it lost in this working proposal
- 16 309 and 310.
- MS. BAILEY: Part of 310.
- 18 MS. MEGGERS: Pardon me?
- 19 MR. MASON: Part of 310.
- MS. MEGGERS: Yeah. It's split. It goes down
- 21 Wrightsboro Road to Belair to Bobby Jones Expressway or
- 22 across to the Dyess Expressway.
- MR. MASON: Linda, since we're out here in this
- 24 particular district I don't know if you might want to--
- MS. MEGGERS: Go ahead.

- 1 MR. MASON: Because I know this affects a lot of
- 2 the ones that came out here tonight, some of the street
- 3 lines or boundary lines so they kind of know if you got
- 4 split up or if you changed, you know, to another
- 5 district or whatever, under this draft plan.
- 6 MS. MEGGERS: Okay. There you go, some streets
- 7 here. You can see taking this area below Belair Road
- 8 and crossing Bobby Jones. It comes out and--well, I
- 9 guess this would be--let me check this.
- MR. MURPHY: As Ms. Meggers is proceeding through
- 11 her presentation, the majority of you I presume are
- 12 voting at precinct 310. I want to reassure that this
- is not the final plan yet, okay. Because our precinct
- 14 310 is actually being split by Jimmy Dyess Parkway. Of
- 15 course our voting precinct is right across the street.
- 16 So keep in mind that this was the initial plan that Ms.
- 17 Meggers is presenting to us. It's a plan in progress,
- 18 in the works, okay.
- 19 MR. MASON: And while we're here at this point,
- 20 Linda, just a second, could we see a show of hands that
- 21 actually vote in precinct 310.
- MS. BAILEY: Which is the Crossroads Fellowship
- 23 Church.
- MR. MASON: That's 13--14. Let the record reflect
- 25 14.

- 1 MS. MEGGERS: Is this a little bit more clear with
- 2 the streets and everything I've picked up here.
- MS. BAILEY: The line goes right toward Belair to
- 4 Dyess and then south down Dyess.
- 5 MS. MEGGERS: Down to the railroad and back up.
- 6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Now, you're talking about where
- 7 we vote now or where--
- 8 MS. BAILEY: Right now if you go across the street
- 9 to the church, that's what we're talking about that--
- 10 the big precinct. It's grown a lot in this area. In
- 11 fact, there are now according to the census, 8,000
- 12 people living in that precinct, which is big. And so
- one of the things that Ms. Meggers looked at in drawing
- 14 this working plan, took a chunk out of your precinct,
- 15 as you know it.
- 16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible.]
- MS. BAILEY: As Representative Murphy said
- 18 earlier, it's not a final plan. I might be out of
- 19 order, Mr. Chairman, but here for us tonight is in fact
- 20 to hear--
- 21 MR. MASON: Right. To hear those types of
- 22 concerns. We'll go back--we will have another
- 23 committee meeting. We may have several of them,
- 24 depending upon whether we can get through the next
- 25 commission meeting. It's not a public hearing to hear

- 1 from the public but it's to take all of the input that
- 2 we've got from the three public hearings and then try
- 3 to work out those issues that have been brought up such
- 4 as, you know, what you may be talking about.
- Now, let me say this, too, the public is welcome
- 6 to come to all of our meetings, but every meeting is
- 7 not open for the public to have dialogue. That's the
- 8 reason why we're coming out here now. This is being
- 9 made part of the record. We've got the recorder over
- 10 here. So any issues that you have, those are--those
- 11 will be annotated and we'll go back to our next meeting
- 12 and we'll talk about all those issues that people
- 13 brought up and try to work through them. So that's
- 14 kind of how it works, so do ask questions or do have
- 15 questions because your questions are being put on the
- 16 record and then that record is going to be given to us
- 17 at our next committee meeting and we're going to work
- 18 that out. And you're welcome to come to that and we'll
- 19 talk about that a little later as far as the time and
- 20 location. You're welcome to come to that but that's
- 21 not the time to have input. We're making that right
- 22 now. Yes.
- 23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Under the plan are you
- 24 separating communities like--
- MR. MASON: Hold on. Hold on. If we're going to

- 1 start taking questions I have to have you come to the
- 2 mic so that it can be recorded. So if you could, if
- 3 you will let her finish because there will be an
- 4 opportunity to have some questions. Don't forget them,
- 5 though. If you need a pen, you can have mine and write
- 6 it down. But we do want -- we do want to have questions.
- 7 And anything that you see as a potential issue as she
- 8 goes through it, annotate that and let's talk about it.
- 9 MR. BRIGHAM: Alvin.
- 10 MR. MASON: Yes.
- 11 MR. BRIGHAM: While we're looking at those that
- were voting in 310, let's look at those that are left
- in the old 310 as opposed to those that are being moved
- into District 5, if you don't mind.
- MR. MASON: Not a problem. Linda.
- 16 MR. BRIGHAM: I mean on your count.
- 17 MS. MEGGERS: I think he meant--
- 18 MR. MASON: Okay.
- MR. BRIGHAM: For the count here so we can kind of
- 20 get a feel.
- MR. MASON: So that was 14, I think we got that
- 22 for the record. And that was for the old 310. Now,
- 23 the way that—if you understood the way it's being
- 24 proposed to be broken down, how many will now vote in
- 25 the new 310?

- 1 [No response.]
- 2 MR. MASON: I see no hands.
- 3 MR. PADGETT: They don't know yet.
- 4 MR. MASON: Oh. Okay. So there's a level of
- 5 understanding we've got to make sure--I need for you to
- 6 make sure you understand what's going on and where your
- 7 areas are because it's going to affect you potentially.
- 8 MR. MURPHY: Let me address that. Those of you
- 9 that are--that are living east of Jimmy Dyess Parkway.
- 10 If you live in Fort Gordon and you are headed north,
- 11 all of you that are living to the right of Jimmy Dyess
- 12 Parkway, that's the boundary that you will be placed in
- 13 to District 5.
- MR. MASON: Toward gate 1; right?
- MR. MURPHY: Yeah. So you're talking about all of
- 16 you that are living perhaps in Buckhead, Elderberry,
- 17 Ashberry. It's about, what, 10 or 12 subdivisions over
- 18 there. So all of you--
- 19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible]
- MR. MURPHY: Beg your pardon. So, you know,
- 21 you're talking about an area of 310 that's had a
- 22 substantial growth in the past four to five years. You
- 23 will be actually--under this plan you're going to be
- 24 moved to District 5.
- MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chairman, I think we should let

- 1 Ms. Meggers finish her presentation where we'll have a
- 2 better picture and then take questions.
- 3 MR. MASON: Agreed. But one of the things that I
- 4 want to make sure, because I think it's important as
- 5 we're moving along, there's got to be a level of
- 6 understanding because if she gets to the end and we're
- 7 already lost, you know, then that's a lot of room to
- 8 backtrack. So, although, I'm not in disagreement with
- 9 that, but I've got to see some north and south going on
- 10 out there that there's some level of understanding
- 11 before we get too deep into it. But the rest of it--
- 12 'cause she's got to go over some districts that doesn't
- 13 necessarily apply to you out here but we've got to put
- 14 it out so we can see how it is. And then maybe--like
- 15 you said, we'll come back and focus directly on this--
- 16 we'll come back and focus directly on that district and
- 17 any others that people might see as a issue. How about
- 18 that. All right.
- 19 MS. MEGGERS: But just before I move on. So this
- 20 is Wrightsboro Road coming out across Bobby Jones. And
- 21 then at this point Wrightsboro goes this way. This is
- 22 Belair Road, out to Dyess and down. It follows the
- 23 railroad. Okay. So that's 3. Now, 5, we're talking
- 24 about it coming up and picking up this area but it also
- 25 comes down and picks up one precinct out of 4 on this

- 1 working plan. And that's precinct 403. So that area
- 2 in addition would move to 5. And moving that one
- 3 precinct on the working plan balances the overage that
- 4 was in District 4. Remember, it was a district that
- 5 had the second largest overage in population. So then
- 6 6 was a little bit short and 8 was a little bit over.
- 7 And by moving this one precinct, Precinct 805, that
- 8 balanced both of those. So that gives you 6 and 8.
- 9 That leaves only district 7 that hasn't been covered.
- 10 That's up here in the corner. It's landlocked by the
- 11 Savannah River and the Columbia County line on this
- 12 way. Now, remember, it's the one that numbers-wise
- 13 didn't have to be touched. And I'm leaving it up to
- 14 the committee. We can take off this one area and
- 15 perhaps move but that might disturb sort of the balance
- 16 racially in District 3, so we've left 7 alone 'cause
- 17 it's the one that's within the acceptable deviation
- 18 range.
- Now, overall on the deviations for one person, one
- 20 vote, this gives us a plan that's a minus 2.29 percent
- 21 to a plus 2.41, an overal 4.69, so less than half of
- 22 what is allowable legally for one person, one vote
- 23 deviation. So the numbers for there are fine.
- Now, let's look a little bit at the Voting Rights
- 25 Act and the changes there. District 1 under the

- 1 existing plan is 65 percent and under the proposed plan
- 2 it's 66.41. District 2 under the existing plan is
- 3 77.02 and it goes to 74.82 total black population.
- 4 District 3 under the existing plan is 42.30 and it
- 5 drops to 37.83 under the working plan. District 4, the
- 6 existing plan is 78.76 and this changes only to 78.52,
- 7 just a quarter of a percent. District 5 is presently
- 8 75.78; it moves to 77.03. District 6 is 52.97 and on
- 9 this plan it's 52.99. District 7, of course, remains
- 10 the same at 29.07 percent total black. District 8 is
- 11 32.94 and it would go to 31.51. District 9 under the
- 12 combination would--this plan would be 74.24 percent
- total black while the Super-district 10 would be 37.76.
- 14 MR. MASON: And let me add here that for those
- 15 that may have attended other--the other two public
- 16 hearings that we've had and the issues that were
- 17 brought up, none of those issues have been addressed in
- 18 the plan yet that have been brought up previously. So
- 19 what you see is what we've been dealing with from the
- 20 very beginning. We've recorded all of the issues that
- 21 people have said in the other two meetings and we're
- 22 going to address that, but you don't see that addressed
- 23 in here tonight. So if somebody had a question in
- 24 their mind, well, what happened, we haven't formally
- 25 addressed those issues in terms of putting them on the

- 1 map and a plan of those issues that we talked about in
- 2 previous meetings.
- 3 MS. MEGGERS: Are there any questions?
- 4 MR. MASON: Okay. Now, this is a time for
- 5 questions, but it's important that we understand where
- 6 we are as far as the districts that you all live in or
- 7 are concerned with. So before we actually get to a
- 8 question, is there any additional explanation for
- 9 clarity or understanding? Do we need to go back and
- 10 look at in particular an area that's being broken down
- 11 to give anybody any additional clarity or anything like
- 12 that? Do we need--yes, sir.
- AUDIENCE MEMBER: Do you have an overlay that you
- 14 can put up there showing the districts as they are now
- and overlay over that one to show the changes? Can we
- 16 see both of them?
- MS. MEGGERS: I can't do both at the same time.
- 18 The best I can do with an overlay. See the black
- 19 lines?
- 20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.
- 21 MS. MEGGERS: Those are the existing lines, okay.
- Now, I can close this down and go back to the original
- 23 and overlay this line on the original. Is that what
- 24 you're asking?
- 25 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah. Let me see what the

- 1 difference in the changes -- the changes made.
- 2 MR. MASON: And from this point forward, any
- 3 questions, please come to the mic so that our recorder
- 4 can record all this and Department of Justice can
- 5 clearly see that we've had public input and we're going
- 6 to address the concerns that the public has.
- 7 And while she's finishing that up, I just want to
- 8 give the information that it is our intent to keep the
- 9 school board lines and commission district lines the
- 10 same, just as they are now, to alleviate any confusion
- 11 or issues in terms of where you would vote for your
- 12 school board representative versus where you would vote
- 13 for your commission representative. We're going to
- 14 keep those lines the exact same just as they are now.
- MS. MEGGERS: Okay. The red lines are the working
- 16 plan. The shaded areas are the current plan that's in
- 17 effect today. I'm going to zoom in so you can see a
- 18 little bit more closely but here you can see between 6
- 19 and 8 the only change is this one precinct here. It's
- 20 now green, which it's outlined by red. District 1, you
- 21 can see comes down and picks up these portions of 4--I
- 22 mean 2. Remember, the red line is the working plan so
- 23 it would have picked up this one and this one.
- 24 District 2 had lost these two. It balances by picking
- 25 these up from 5. And then 5 comes down and picks up

- 1 this from 4 and goes up in here and picks this from 3.
- 2 One change in 4. 8 was over there and, then, of
- 3 course, there's no change in 7. Does that help you or
- 4 is there something else I can do to make it more clear?
- 5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's good. Thank you.
- 6 MR. MASON: Next question. Please state your name
- 7 for the record, please, and address.
- 8 MR. HASAN: Ben Hasan, 3529 Monte Carlo Drive.
- 9 Good evening. Ms. Meggers, in terms of what you
- 10 mentioned much earlier in your presentation this
- 11 evening, you mentioned about protecting incumbency. In
- 12 this State, you know, commission--county commissioners
- 13 have a term limit, our school board does not. If a
- 14 person was expired in 2012 on the school board, they
- 15 can--you know, are they still--possibly protected. Do
- 16 we need to kind of look at that and consider as a
- 17 county putting term limits on our school board as well.
- 18 Because they don't have a term and so they can forever
- 19 be what you consider protected--up under a protected
- 20 incumbency.
- 21 MS. MEGGERS: There is no legal requirement to
- 22 protect any incumbent who's either term limited this
- 23 time or whose term expires in 2012. The ones that are
- 24 legally protected from the standpoint that state law
- 25 says we cannot shorten a term are those incumbents, be

- 1 they commissioners or school board members, whose term
- 2 does not expire until 2014.
- 3 MR. HASAN: Okay. Talking about the 2 percent
- 4 deviation, I know that's what the body gave you to work
- 5 with. You've done a phenomenal job. I've been to all
- 6 the meetings from the start. But in terms of -- is it
- 7 binding? Can they now as they begin to go work with
- 8 themselves, can they now look up to five percent either
- 9 way at this point? Are you just doing what they asked
- 10 you to do at this point?
- MS. MEGGERS: Yes, sir. It was a beginning point
- 12 as a guideline to begin. As they come back in after
- 13 these hearings and have heard everything from the
- 14 public, as they begin to address those concerns and
- 15 it's needed to go a little bit larger than that
- deviation, the committee certainly has that wherewithal
- and that power to do so, as long as we stay within the
- 18 plus or minus five.
- MR. HASAN: Okay. Also, can we also--the
- 20 committee, I mean, can they also approach this from the
- 21 future as they begin to, you know, work with each other
- 22 directly, begin to approach drawing a map based on the
- 23 natural growth in this community as opposed to what's
- 24 happening right now. In other words, a lot of growth
- is in south Augusta and off of--obviously some out here

- 1 as well, so can those districts reflect that more so
- 2 than anything else as opposed to trying to keep it a
- 3 racial demographic. In other words, like District 5 is
- 4 75 percent like you say currently but what you're going
- 5 to do is going to possibly--what you're proposing right
- 6 now or what you're working for right now is going to
- 7 push it to 77 percent African-American. Is that a good
- 8 way to be going or should it be going the opposite way
- 9 to kind of spread that around and try to bring those
- 10 districts back into the 60th percentile.
- 11 MS. MEGGERS: That sounds good in theory.
- 12 Sometimes that is very difficult to do in a practical
- 13 way because of the concentration of population in
- 14 certain areas. There's certain areas that no matter
- which way I'm going, they're going to--from a majority
- 16 black standpoint are going to be in the 70s because
- 17 either way that I move those districts, I'm going to
- 18 run into more minority population. When it comes to
- 19 out here around the fringes, that's something that the
- 20 committee can certainly take into consideration in
- 21 their deliberations.
- MR. HASAN: Okay. Also talk about the influenced
- 23 voters. We have all these--this is my last question.
- 24 Also about the influenced voters in District 3 and
- 25 District 8, I think much earlier in your presentation.

- 1 Those numbers are going to decrease and those districts
- 2 become an African-American vote. Some of those are
- 3 going to go from about 42 percent to 37 percent
- 4 African-American in those districts. All these elected
- 5 officials here will tell you, and you know as well,
- 6 that influencers when we're talking about elections,
- 7 some of the first people that they talk to is when they
- 8 talk to the general public is to let them know their
- 9 intent to run for office. So should we be decreasing
- 10 influence votes and should we increase that, if
- 11 anything or leave it to maintain it if possible?
- MS. MEGGERS: Well, I think that it's good to
- 13 maintain them. If they're an influenced district now
- 14 you've got maintained, there's no legal requirement to
- 15 maintain influenced districts at the same level. But
- they've been maintained as influenced districts.
- 17 District 8 has a very slight decrease. I think the one
- 18 that folks are the most concerned about, though, is
- 19 District 3, the fact that it went from 42.3 to 37.83.
- 20 I think that's an area of concern that the committee
- 21 wants to look at.
- MR. HASAN: Okay. I just wanted to make sure we
- 23 had other options and we're not binding to that degree.
- MS. MEGGERS: There's nothing binding about this
- 25 plan. It was a working proposal just to get the

- 1 discussion started and get input from the public so the
- 2 committee can take that back and do their adjustments.
- MR. HASAN: So in other words, and this is my
- 4 final one, just a followup with my first question. And
- 5 that was a 2 percent deviation that they gave you to
- 6 work with. In other words, they can move away from
- 7 that if they see fit?
- 8 MS. MEGGERS: Yes. That was a beginning point.
- 9 And the good thing about holding to that 2 percent to
- 10 begin with, it gives them some room to maneuver when
- 11 they go back to drawing -- to adjusting this plan. That
- 12 gave them some adjustment but they--that's up to them
- 13 to change. But that was just a beginning point, a
- 14 guideline. It's a good one but it's not cast in stone.
- MR. HASAN: Thank you, ma'am. Have a good night.
- MR. MASON: Two things I want to add, Linda, to
- 17 his question, that as far as the 2 percent. I believe
- 18 at our first meeting we said we'd start on a 2 percent
- 19 but we'd have the right to go up or go down. And so
- 20 that has been addressed. Also, District 3 in terms of
- 21 the loss or the retrogression, if you will, of the
- 22 African-American vote there, that was an issue that has
- 23 been brought up and is on the record and we will
- 24 address that. Again, like I said, when these issues
- 25 come up, when we have the next meeting for us, we're

- 1 going to address those issues that people have brought
- 2 up. So that is an issue that has been brought up and
- 3 that is an issue that we're going to address. And
- 4 possibly 8 as well.
- 5 MS. SPENCER: Hi. Debra Spencer and my address is
- 6 3355 Sugar Mill Road. And I really was just--
- 7 MR. MASON: Could you speak up, please or into the
- 8 mic or pull the mic up to you.
- 9 MS. SPENCER: Under the proposed plan will you
- 10 consolidate -- will you reconsolidate neighborhoods that
- 11 were broken apart under the last plan that you've
- 12 drawn. For example, like what happened in Sand Ridge.
- 13 And under the new plan are you breaking apart
- 14 communities and neighborhoods to meet these guidelines?
- MS. MEGGERS: Yes. I think Sand Ridge has--has
- 16 come up at every meeting as being an area that -- a
- 17 community that desires to be put back together intact
- in the new proposed plan. On any plan I think we're
- 19 going to take a lot of effort to keep communities
- 20 together. There's some on this plan that when I drew
- 21 it I probably didn't realize what I was--that I had
- 22 separated something. And so those that have been
- 23 commented on during the public hearings will be
- 24 addressed by the committee in a final plan.
- MR. MASON: And there's--again, that is an issue

- 1 that's been brought up and we're going to address that,
- 2 but let me say this about any plan. There is no
- 3 perfect plan. There is a lot of work that has to be
- 4 done when we talk about we're at 36 percent deviation.
- 5 And when you talk about a census tract, not a regular
- 6 block, you've got to start looking at features that
- 7 are--that meet all areas as a tract itself. So
- 8 someone's going to be dissatisfied, I can assure you.
- 9 At the end of the day, no matter what we do, somebody
- 10 is going to be dissatisfied because this is not the
- 11 type of plan that will satisfy one hundred percent of
- 12 the people one hundred percent of the time. That's
- 13 unfortunate but that's the reality of the situation.
- 14 But we do look at trying to keep the communities
- 15 together as much as we possibly can. And those that
- 16 have been brought before us, we're going to address
- 17 those issues as much as we can and try to rectify if we
- 18 can, within the guidelines that we're given.
- DR. CHARLES SMITH: Good evening, again, Mr.
- 20 Chairman, I'm Dr. Charles Smith, President of Augusta
- 21 NAACP branch. I reside at 2910 Inwood Drive,
- 22 Hephzibah, Georgia. I've attended each one of the
- 23 public hearings and just have a couple of questions.
- 24 Once this hearing is concluded and you go back into
- 25 discussion, what's the time line for completion of the

- 1 entire project and recommendation and will there be a
- 2 followup hearing, per se, for the public based on
- 3 concerns from the 37 percent or the 42 percent balance
- 4 we were looking at at Pine Hill the other night?
- 5 MR. MASON: Right now we have some scheduling
- 6 conflicts but we have tentatively scheduled a public
- 7 meeting for next--the 27th. I want to say it's
- 8 Thursday, okay. Right now it's scheduled for 2:00 p.m.
- 9 That conflicts with some of the committee members and
- 10 we may have to push that forward to around 4:00 or so,
- 11 which also gives the public an opportunity to come out
- 12 as well. And on that particular day I would anticipate
- 13 that we're going to spend about two to three hours
- 14 potentially on the number of issues that have been
- 15 brought up in the three meetings, trying to clarify
- with Linda and move things around the map to address
- some of those issues, be it Sand Ridge or be it
- 18 District 3 or what have you. So that's going to be a
- 19 work session, again, for the committee and not for the
- open public. And then from that standpoint the
- 21 committee will decide where do we go from there. So I
- 22 don't want to put the cart before the horse. Initially
- 23 when we met I think we looked at the first or second
- 24 week in November trying to be finished with this whole
- 25 process. We have a few things to tweak. We'd like to

- 1 be finished earlier if we can. And if we can address
- 2 all of the issues and finish next Tuesday--excuse me,
- 3 next Thursday, and then put it out and everything is
- 4 addressed then that would work with me as far as I'm
- 5 concerned. But we may go beyond that. We're looking
- 6 at the very latest the second week of November. But
- 7 you have to understand that this not only has to clear
- 8 here but it's got to go through the legislative
- 9 delegation. It also has to go through the Department
- 10 of Justice. We've got to get clearance and all that
- 11 stuff. There's a number of different things that have
- 12 to happen. And the legislative delegation meets in
- 13 January, I think, and so, you know, we want to make
- 14 sure that we've got plenty of enough time to process on
- 15 this final map. So, again, the second week is what
- 16 we're looking at. It's possible it could be before
- 17 that, but right now we don't know until after we meet
- on the 27th to figure out where we're at and did we--
- 19 were we able to adequately address the concerns based
- 20 on the legality or the legal guidelines that we must
- 21 adhere to.
- DR. CHARLES SMITH: Yes, sir. Have you decided
- 23 the location? You did mention two o'clock.
- MR. MASON: I'm sorry. That would be at the--
- MR. PADGETT: At the Richmond County Board

- 1 auditorium area. And I think if the Chair is in
- 2 agreement we probably need to go ahead and move that to
- 3 four o'clock.
- 4 DR. CHARLES SMITH: Thank you. And my final
- 5 I have observed on behalf of the community comment.
- 6 and as a Justice Department representative, one of the
- 7 three for the community, I just want to commend the
- 8 work that we have seen and observed. I think there's
- been continuity among all the committee members and 9
- 10 community input has been positive thus far. But we
- 11 just want to make sure that there is an opportunity to
- 12 have support, for the community to be involved and to
- 13 have more input if deemed necessary. Based on the
- lines that we've seen drawn and concerns that have been 14
- 15 addressed, thus far we are pleased, but we are waiting
- 16 for the final decision and for a recommendation to be
- brought forth from the committee. We will have a 17
- 18 conference call tonight with the Georgia State NAACP
- and I will give a positive report at this time based on 19
- 20 what I have observed on behalf of the community and the
- 21 State NAACP. Thank you. And we hope you continue to
- 22 work together and do what's best and fair when the
- 23 lines are finalized for all the citizens and not
- 2.4 divulge or deviate away from the Justice Department's
- 25 2.5 percent percentile, whereas the African-American

- 1 vote will not be, in a sense, decreased or diminished.
- 2 Thank you, sir.
- 3 MR. MASON: Thank you. And I think we're all
- 4 committed--our committee members are committed to doing
- 5 so. And at this point before the next question comes
- 6 up I want to reiterate, you're more than welcome,
- 7 you're encouraged, to come to our public hearing on the
- 8 27th at the Richmond County Board of Education. We're
- 9 now saying at 4:00 p.m. in the auditorium. But you're
- 10 more than welcome to come and that way we can--you
- 11 automatically know that you are more than welcome to
- 12 come.
- Ma'am, did you have a question? Please state your
- 14 name and address for the record.
- MS. TOLBERT: Good evening, everyone. My name is
- 16 Ms. Deborah Tolbert. 1026 Amberly Way. I have looked
- 17 at all of the districts and it still appears to me that
- 18 District 3 is still out of compliance. And the second
- 19 question I have, and you may have addressed at other
- 20 meetings. Will the change in these districts affect
- 21 school teacher--student-teacher ratio or anything like
- 22 that?
- MS. CAIN: No.
- MS. TOLBERT: Thank you.
- MR. MASON: Now, let me ask you something because

- 1 you said a couple of things there. When you say it
- 2 looks to you like it's out of compliance, in which way
- 3 do you see that that's out of compliance?
- 4 As far as the 2 percent on either side when
- 5 looking at District 3 for 2010, it's 42.3 and the new
- 6 plan is 37. That's a difference of almost 5, not 2.
- 7 And I'm questioning why. I don't know the exact
- 8 numbers for 309 and 310 but why two of them. I'm
- 9 thinking you may want to reconsider just moving one to
- 10 be in compliance.
- MR. MASON: And, maybe you can answer me because I
- 12 don't know if one is--or we can show it up here.
- MS. MEGGERS: Okay. Let's answer the first
- 14 question about the 2 percent. When they're talking
- about the 2 percent deviation, they're talking about
- 16 total population for equal population. Remember, I
- 17 said there is two legal guidelines. One is one person,
- 18 one vote and then the other one is the voting rights.
- 19 And District 3, of course, is a strong influence
- 20 district but in this working plan it was reduced from
- 21 42.3 to right at 38 percent. That 2 percent guideline
- 22 doesn't apply to the racial makeup. We're talking
- 23 about just the population deviation from equal
- 24 population. And I think the committee has taken due
- 25 note of the fact that that four and half percent drop

- 1 in minority population from the 42.3 to the 37.83.
- 2 They're going to take note of that.
- 3 MR. MASON: Right. Now--and I think maybe where
- 4 she was going. I don't want to speak for you but let
- 5 me just let me add this, that maybe you're looking at
- 6 it from a retrogression standpoint, that the African-
- 7 American vote was at 42 and it retrogressed down to 37.
- 8 MS. TOLBERT: Actually, I was comparing it to the
- 9 other districts and the number changes. District 3
- 10 changes have been more significant than the other
- 11 districts.
- MR. MASON: Of the African-American vote?
- 13 MS. TOLBERT: Yes.
- 14 MR. MASON: That's retrogression.
- MS. MEGGERS: One thing that you do need to
- 16 remember about District 3, it was the district that had
- 17 to change the most from a population standpoint that it
- 18 was almost a fifth of a district too much, so, you
- 19 know, for the guidelines with that to get it down. But
- 20 in so doing this working plan also we do see the total
- 21 black population that needs to be addressed.
- MS. TOLBERT: Okay. Maybe you're not
- 23 understanding me. I think you went overboard instead
- of putting it compliance with the other districts when
- 25 I compare the other districts with the results of

- 1 District 3.
- 2 MR. MASON: What they gained or what they lost.
- 3 MS. TOLBERT: Exactly.
- 4 MR. MASON: And that's--that is an issue that has
- 5 been put on the record and is on the record here again
- 6 tonight and that's something we will look at on the
- 7 27th as well.
- Are there any other questions, concerns, issues?
- 9 Now is your opportunity, please take it.
- 10 MR. BARNES: My name is Irby Barnes. I live at
- 11 2538 West Kensington Drive. I was concerned about
- 12 District 4 and District 5 for overlap, 5 overlap
- 13 District 4. So what happened to District 4 after the
- 14 overlap of 5?
- MR. MASON: Well, District 4 had to lose some
- 16 3200, okay. So--and, again, in keeping with some of
- 17 the criteria that in order to give to a district
- 18 because District 5 needed it. Remember, they lost--
- 19 first of all they needed about 2200 or so or 2000 to
- 20 begin with and then 2 precincts was taken from them--
- 21 well, 3 precincts to go into District 2--or at least 2
- 22 precincts. I forget which three. Three precincts. So
- 23 that cut then down even more. So 5 borders 4. We're
- 24 bordering districts; we touch each other. I've got to
- lose; he's got to gain. And so the question becomes --

- 1 he couldn't gain from 2 because he just gave to 2. See
- 2 what I'm saying?
- 3 MR. BARNES: Okay.
- 4 MR. MASON: He borders 3 but the demographics, he
- 5 can't pull all from 3 because it's not like
- 6 demographics. His African-American vote would go down
- 7 dramatically. District 4 has predominantly some 77/78
- 8 percent African-American. So from a like community,
- 9 which is what we talked about initially, he can pull
- 10 from a like community. See, you can only pull from
- 11 districts that you border, that you touch. So that's
- 12 why it overlapped because he had to pull from 3--or
- 13 excuse me, from 4. Now, what could have happened but
- 14 we chose not to, and I want to make sure we're very
- 15 clear on this, Barton Chapel right at Deans Bridge and
- 16 then Gordon Highway right where the Burger King and the
- 17 McDonald's is, starting there. If you go up as you're
- 18 going toward Gordon Highway, right now currently
- 19 everything on the right is District 5. Everything on
- 20 the left is District 4. So you would say, well, that
- 21 would be the most likely place where you would pull
- 22 from because those streets separates, but we're
- 23 protecting Ms. Barbara Pulliam who is in the seat now
- 24 as a school board member and she lives out in that
- 25 area. So we didn't pull from there so we had to come

- 1 in on another side and pull from another side, because
- 2 as she stated, we kept all incumbents protected.
- MR. BARNES: So what happened to the board--people
- 4 that's on the school board. What happened--it's
- 5 supposed to be 10, right?
- 6 MR. MASON: Right. But two are super-districts
- 7 which is a combination of 1, 2, 4 and 5. And then 3,
- 8 6, 7, and 8. So that's Super-district 9 and Super-
- 9 district 10. That's where ten people come in. If you
- 10 fix the first eight districts, you've already fixed the
- 11 two super-districts.
- MR. BARNES: Thank you.
- 13 MR. MASON: Yes, sir.
- MR. IVEY: My name is John Ivey and I'm at 3970
- 15 Bolton Street. Now, what I'm hearing that districts
- 16 have to touch.
- 17 MR. MASON: Yes, sir.
- MR. IVEY: Okay. You all removed three precincts
- 19 from District and put them in District 2.
- MR. MASON: Correct.
- MR. IVEY: Then you took two out of District 3 and
- 22 put them in District 5.
- MR. MASON: Correct.
- MR. IVEY: And then you removed one out of
- 25 District 4 and placed that in District 5.

- 1 MR. MASON: Correct.
- MR. IVEY: Give this 5 the three back. But, now,
- 3 3 touches 2, 4 and 5 touch, 4 and 3 touching.
- 4 MR. MASON: Right.
- 5 MR. IVEY: How come you couldn't just remove one
- 6 from District 4--I'm sorry, one from District 3 and one
- 7 from District 5 to be placed in District 2?
- 8 MR. MASON: One from District 5?
- 9 MR. IVEY: Right.
- MR. MASON: Remember, we talked about like
- 11 communities. District 2 currently was 70-some-odd
- 12 percent; right?
- MS. MEGGERS: Yeah, 77.
- 14 MR. IVEY: And it's almost 80 percent now.
- MR. MASON: Right. But what I'm saying is, if you
- 16 pull from District 3, that drops that dramatically
- 17 because it's not like communities. You've got
- 18 predominantly Caucasian or white in District 3 and
- 19 you've got predominantly black in District 4. Do you
- 20 see what I'm saying? So--and in 5, so you can't--you
- 21 can't pull two or three districts from 3 because the
- 22 demographics are not the same.
- 23 MR. IVEY: You pulled--you pulled two precincts
- 24 from 3. You're telling me you can't do it.
- MR. MASON: But the two from--that went into 5.

- 1 MR. IVEY: Right. Okay. Now, you took three out
- 2 of 5 but you put three back in 5. That don't make
- 3 sense to me.
- 4 MR. LOCKETT: Let me answer. You missed the word
- 5 contiguous. If they touch—the entire district, all
- 6 parts of it, must--must touch somewhere. In order to
- 7 move one district to another district, those two
- 8 districts much touch each other.
- 9 MR. IVEY: Right.
- 10 MR. LOCKETT: Okay. And what is happening is,
- 11 like we said earlier, District 7 at the top did not
- 12 change. District 1, District 2 is similar as far as
- minority population is concerned. So District 1 and 2,
- 14 they couldn't pull from 7 because 7, there was no
- 15 changes necessary. So what they had to do is come down
- 16 south and pull upwards. It was that ripple effect I
- 17 guess you might say.
- MR. MASON: And let me do it like this. Linda, if
- 19 you would because this is your area here. It's
- 20 important to understand contiguous. You may can touch
- in one area but the districts that you're talking about
- 22 may not touch from that area, pulling the three from
- 23 that area. So if she would bring up that map that
- 24 shows 2--or really center it on 2, 3, and 5, so he can
- 25 kind of understand a little bit, 'cause 3 does touch 5

- 1 but only in a certain area, and 3 touches 2 but only in
- 2 a certain area where you have the demographics to match
- 3 it.
- 4 Those particular--let me say this. Those
- 5 particular precincts that came out of 3 had enough
- 6 African-Americans in it that did not disturb the
- 7 population for 5 that was needed. Now, if we pulled it
- 8 from somewhere else, if it touched, then that would
- 9 dramatically reduce it and it would also dramatically
- 10 reduce District 2.
- 11 MR. IVEY: All right. But you're pulling--
- MR. MASON: And then you have some serious issues.
- MR. IVEY: Okay. You're pulling from 5 but then
- 14 you put them back in 5. What kind of--you know, why
- 15 you pull them in the first place if you're going to put
- 16 something back?
- MR. MASON: You have a choice. 1, District 1 was
- in need. That was the starting point, so I need you to
- 19 understand that. You couldn't pull from 3, right.
- 20 We've already said that. You can't pull from 3 to put
- 21 into 1, okay. From where 1 touches 3 the demographics
- 22 are not the same, okay. So where 1 touches 8, the
- 23 demographics are not the same. So the only place you
- 24 could pull was from 2. Now, when we go up, 2 has lost
- 25 two, okay. Now, you've got to be able to pull--or 5

- 1 has lost two, rather. Now, you've got to be able to
- 2 pull from somewhere else.
- 3 MR. IVEY: You couldn't pull from 6 to 1?
- 4 MR. MASON: No, no. We've already talked about 6.
- 5 MR. IVEY: Does 6 touch?
- 6 MR. MASON: 1 and 8 touch.
- 7 MS. MEGGERS: But 6 is already short.
- 8 MR. MASON: 6 is short, though.
- 9 MR. IVEY: You-all said it touched. It doesn't
- 10 make a difference whether it's half a mile or four
- 11 miles. It's touching.
- MR. MASON: Well, it does make a difference in
- 13 terms of the precinct that you are pulling from.
- 14 MR. IVEY: Okay.
- MR. MASON: And that's the whole thing. Maybe
- 16 it's a little bit clearer. If it touches that don't
- 17 mean that you can pull any precinct. That means you've
- 18 got to pull from the area where it touches. So if 310
- 19 touches 5, you can't pull 301 if 301 don't touch 5. So
- 20 that--I think that's one thing that you've got to
- 21 understand, so maybe, Linda if you can--
- MS. MEGGERS: I think part of your confusion is
- 23 the fact that if you pull two--
- MR. IVEY: I'm not confused.
- MS. MEGGERS: Okay. I'm getting confused. How is

- 1 the best way. During redistricting you have to find a
- 2 place to start. In this case I started with District 1
- 3 because it had the biggest shortfall. It's also more
- 4 difficult to fix it because I have very few directions
- 5 to go because we've got the Savannah River and South
- 6 Carolina over here, which limits my possibilities. I
- 7 chose not--this area is what I call a dog leg that
- 8 comes down here but this has hardly any population.
- 9 The heart of the population for District 1 is downtown.
- 10 It's a downtown district, so in order to maintain the
- 11 core of that district and the spirit and the makeup of
- 12 the district I went right adjacent into District 2
- 13 because these precincts are very much like what's
- 14 already in District 1. So that was the starting point.
- 15 And it's kind of like once you--you've seen those where
- 16 they push the first domino and then you see it go, do,
- do, do, do. Well, once I do this first District 1 I
- 18 pushed over that first domino and I took those two
- 19 precincts. Well, I have to--District 2 was the best
- 20 one to go into to fix 1 in my opinion. And so then 2
- 21 was short but I made it even shorter by that first one.
- 22 So that was that first domino. So then 2, what did it
- 23 touch. I was being very careful because I don't want
- 24 to disturb the numbers in 3 much more than I did so I
- was staying away from that one. So I came into

- 1 District 5. So those are those--and all three of those
- 2 were short. Now, District 7 was okay. I just left it
- 3 alone. 3 was going to get pulled from because it was
- 4 already over. It had the most to give of any of the
- 5 other districts, so it had to move.
- 6 MR. IVEY: Okay. Maybe I missed something. What
- 7 did you pull from 1? I mean what did you add to 1,
- 8 from where?
- 9 MS. MEGGERS: In District 1 I pulled from District
- 10 2 in order to fix--to fix the shortfall.
- MR. IVEY: And what precinct did you pull from 2?
- 12 MS. MEGGERS: Okay. Just a second. Let me go
- 13 back to that. I pulled two precincts, 205 and 206 went
- 14 to 1.
- MR. MASON: And you see where they touch on that
- 16 map.
- MS. MEGGERS: Right here. I picked this one and
- 18 this one. Remember, the black line is the existing
- one. So I moved this one to 1 from District 2 and
- 20 precinct 206 from District 2 to 1. 'Cause remember,
- 21 District 1 was short 4200 people. Does that make
- 22 sense?
- MR. IVEY: That makes sense. Now, District 2.
- MS. MEGGERS: So then District 2 was already short
- 25 and I made it a little shorter by taking those two

- 1 away.
- 2 MR. MASON: And while you're right there, Linda,
- 3 can you kind of explain why you took those particular
- 4 two--
- 5 MS. MEGGERS: From 2 to 1?
- 6 MR. MASON: --African-American as far as the
- 7 balance.
- 8 MS. MEGGERS: Well, for balance and also it's a
- 9 downtown area. The community is very similar to
- 10 District 1. This area of District 1 and 2 are very
- 11 compatible, like communities. So I took these two
- 12 precincts because they were a good fit for District 1
- 13 and maintained it as what I call a downtown district.
- 14 Y'all may have a different term that you think better
- 15 describes it.
- MR. IVEY: Okay. But the percentages that I see
- on this diagram that in 2002 were 65 percent.
- 18 MR. MASON: What was, sir?
- MR. IVEY: The total black population was 65
- 20 percent in 2002.
- MR. MASON: In?
- 22 MR. IVEY: District 1.
- MR. MASON: District 1, okay.
- MR. IVEY: Okay. In 2010 the district was 64
- 25 percent, so that's a little less. That's less than a

- 1 percentage point. But then you all had put it up to 66
- 2 percent. That's where it--that's what the plan says,
- 3 it's going to be 66 percent as opposed to being 65
- 4 percent.
- 5 MS. MEGGERS: It went up about a percentage and a
- 6 half because these two precincts were the right number
- 7 but they were--they--
- 8 MR. IVEY: Right. But I don't see that District 1
- 9 needed the blacks.
- 10 MS. MEGGERS: It didn't, but it needed people and
- 11 it just happened to be that those precincts--remember I
- was saying, sometimes it's hard to reduce numbers or
- 13 whatever, just because of the housing pattern. Well,
- 14 all of this is all heavily African-American
- 15 neighborhoods and precincts so any way I went, unless I
- 16 went into District 7, which was the one district that
- was okay, I was going to pull these kinds of numbers.
- 18 So that's a very slight change in that district.
- MR. MURPHY: And, Linda, please share with the
- 20 audience why you would not move 307 into District 1.
- 21 MS. MEGGERS: 307. In this case it has an
- incumbent commissioner in it and I an under the--my
- 23 beginning point of leaving all incumbents together.
- 24 And I think at that point I wasn't even sure whose term
- 25 was up when. I left that precinct in District 3 simply

- 1 because of that it had an incumbent in it.
- 2 MR. MASON: And the other part that you said you
- 3 didn't see they needed anymore because there were
- 4 already at 64.
- 5 MR. IVEY: Right.
- 6 MR. MASON: But the point is, remember I
- 7 initially--I don't know if you were in here or not.
- 8 But I initially said the ideal that we had to get to
- 9 based on the census data was that every district have
- about 25,000 people. They were short some 4000 so
- 11 we've got to put 4000 into 1, not necessarily that they
- needed more blacks but if we put 4000 in it we couldn't
- 13 retrogress from the number of black vote that they
- 14 already had. That would be voter disenfranchisement.
- 15 We can't put 4000 whites in there and now that becomes
- 16 a white district. So we wouldn't pull them from 3, in
- 17 that particular case where 3 meets 1. So, yes, the
- 18 percentages are about the same, absolutely, because we
- 19 pulled from 2 to make sure the percentage remained
- 20 where it was so we didn't lose District 1. Are you
- 21 with me? There's a lot to this.
- MR. IVEY: Oh, yes, I'm with you. You said you
- 23 wouldn't pull from District 3 but you-all did.
- MR. MASON: No, no. You got to look at these
- 25 situations separately. That was District 1 which

- 1 needed over 4000 folks. So they came from 2. There's
- 2 a lot to that. Now, I didn't say I wasn't pulling from
- 3 District 3. I said not to put into District 1 at that
- 4 particular point where District 1 and 3 touches,
- 5 because you can pull in more white vote into 1 if you
- 6 pulled it from there into 3--well, from 3 to 1. And
- 7 you'd be regressing District 1. It would turn--instead
- 8 of predominantly African-American it would turn
- 9 predominantly white. That can't happen. It can't
- 10 happen.
- MR. IVEY: No, that shouldn't happen.
- MR. MASON: It can't happen.
- MR. IVEY: What I see here is that in 2002,
- 14 according to this, if you go by each district one,
- predominantly back, 1, 2, 3 and 4 and they're
- 16 predominantly black. Now, 6,7, 8 are predominantly
- 17 white. Now, what has happened here is that to keep the
- 18 same--same thing that you had in 2002 but you got more
- 19 blacks in the county. That's what I don't understand.
- MR. MASON: Yes. But that's why the numbers had
- 21 to come up to twenty-five. The numbers didn't have to
- 22 come up to twenty-five in 2002. You didn't have the--
- MR. BRIGHAM: Yes, they did.
- MR. IVEY: They didn't have to come up to twenty-
- 25 five?

- 1 MR. MASON: Or we had to regress in terms of---I
- 2 think we actually lost about 600. I see the point he's
- 3 making.
- 4 MR. IVEY: But see--but you may have lost 600 but
- 5 most of the people that were lost in Richmond County
- 6 were white. Now, when I see it, they're punishing the
- 7 blacks because the whites left or whatever they did. I
- 8 don't know what they did.
- 9 MR. MASON: So what is it that you're saying you
- 10 see is the issue so we can be clear.
- MR. IVEY: Okay. What I see is--what's on--what
- do you-all run about now. But what you have is now the
- 13 same demographic that we had in 2002, which should have
- 14 changed because blacks obviously has increased in this
- 15 county. Now, you're going to punish me because they
- 16 moved next door.
- MR. MASON: Let me go back to 2002 and see what
- 18 the total population--
- 19 MR. BRIGHAM: Alvin, Alvin.
- MR. MASON: --census data that shows what it is in
- 21 2010.
- MR. BRIGHAM: Alvin, he's right in some respects
- 23 but he's wrong in others. When you look at my
- 24 district, I'm in District 7. My district didn't
- 25 change. When you look at 2002 my district is 25

- 1 percent white--I mean 25 percent black and 75 percent
- 2 white. Today it's more like 35 percent black--
- 3 MR. IVEY: No, no. It's got 29 percent. You see
- 4 what I'm saying is--
- 5 MR. BRIGHAM: But it's--what I'm trying to say is
- 6 in other districts the percentage of whites has
- 7 increased also.
- 8 MR. IVEY: Except for 3. We increased--
- 9 MR. BRIGHAM: No. Except--well, they--what we did
- in 3 was we took African-Americans and moved to
- 11 District 5 so that they would have--
- MR. IVEY: But they don't need African-Americans.
- 13 They got a bunch of them over there and you put them in
- 14 District 5.
- MR. BRIGHAM: Well, actually what we did is we
- 16 took a growth area and put it in the 5 to help make up
- 17 the population, is what we did. What you got is you
- 18 got eight--if you take eight pieces of paper and you
- 19 write 25,000 on them. That's what we were trying to do
- 20 is get to eight equal population-sized districts, not
- 21 caring whether they looked like anybody.
- 22 MR. IVEY: I know you--I understand that.
- MR. BRIGHAM: Okay. That was the first thing.
- 24 And then the second thing is we looked at what we got
- 25 when we divided what they looked like.

- 1 MR. IVEY: Right. But you're not--you're trying
- 2 not to do that but this is what you've done. It's
- 3 still--it's still the same as it was in 2002, even
- 4 though the black population increased in this county.
- 5 MS. CAIN: I want to make sure I understand. So
- 6 basically what you're saying is you've had an increase
- 7 in the black population.
- 8 MR. IVEY: Right.
- 9 MS. CAIN: And a decrease in the white population.
- 10 And I want to make sure I understand you. You're
- 11 saying since we've had an increase in the black
- 12 population, therefore the districts should reflect the
- increase. Is that what you're saying?
- 14 MR. IVEY: That's what I'm saying.
- MS. CAIN: That's what I thought. And that's
- 16 where I thought you were going.
- MR. IVEY: Because if it doesn't--because that
- 18 changes who is elected and--
- MR. MASON: Maybe.
- 20 MR. IVEY: Maybe. But if--
- 21 MR. MASON: 'Cause it didn't--
- MR. IVEY: Well, I understand that. But it may--
- MR. MASON: But it gives an opportunity to see
- 24 that.
- MR. IVEY: But if you do this then you guarantee

- 1 it stays the same.
- 2 MR. CAIN: And then that's when they say that we
- 3 cannot digress.
- 4 MR. IVEY: But that's what you're doing.
- 5 MS. CAIN: No, we didn't. We didn't because, see,
- 6 what we're doing is you're still going to have at the
- 7 end of the day--you're still going to have your four
- 8 black districts and your four white districts. Take
- 9 the super-districts out. Because the four black
- 10 districts were there, the four black districts must by
- 11 law remain the black districts. The four white
- 12 districts must by law remain the white districts.
- MR. IVEY: I get you have people leave, but--
- MR. MASON: And let me try to correct that.
- 15 Districts 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 are African-American
- 16 districts population. Then you add in a super
- 17 district, that's six. Six out of ten districts under
- 18 the plan will be African-American, over 50 percent
- 19 African-American districts. Now, who goes out and
- votes and who gets in the seat, that's neither here nor
- 21 there. But do we have six black voting districts, we
- 22 absolutely do. Six out of ten. Our point is, you got
- 23 to go out and vote and be a part of the process. But,
- 24 yes, you do have six. 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 and then you
- 25 add Super-district 9 and that gives you the six black

- 1 voting districts out of ten. And so absolutely, this
- 2 is what we're sitting here for, to ensure that the
- 3 numbers tell us that we do what needs to be done.
- 4 MR. IVEY: But, see, what I'm saying is this.
- 5 that's true. But what you've done with 3 is brought it
- 6 down. You didn't--what's the difference between having
- 7 65 percent black vote in one district and then having--
- 8 as opposed to have 70 percent?
- 9 MR. MASON: I think we agree that 3 has been
- 10 brought down but I think you've also heard us say that
- 11 we're going to address that issue. So if that's what
- 12 the crux of your argument is, I agree with you one
- 13 hundred percent. We're going to address that and
- 14 that's been brought up in a couple of other meetings
- 15 already, come next Thursday. Like I said, when we get
- 16 these all out on the table come next Thursday, we're
- going to address the issues that people have brought up
- 18 and see if we can legally do what we need to do to
- 19 address the issues that you have so eloquently stated.
- 20 So you're absolutely right. It has come down and
- 21 we're going to look at that and we're going to see what
- 22 we can do about that as well as the other issues that
- 23 have been brought out. Yes, sir.
- MR. IVEY: Thank you.
- MR. MASON: Thank you. Go ahead.

- 1 MS. BRASWELL: Monique Braswell, 2273 Essex. I
- 2 just want to know the precincts that were taken from 2
- 3 and the ones that were placed into 3, like, if Ms.
- 4 Meggers can--I can't identify it by the numbers so
- 5 maybe you can.
- 6 MS. BAILEY: Are you asking what was moved out of
- 7 2 into 1?
- 8 MS. BRASWELL: Yes.
- 9 MS. BAILEY: It would be the voters that voted at
- 10 Cherry Tree Crossing at Johnson Recreation Center and
- 11 the voters who vote at Highland Park. Now, keep in
- 12 mind also that you're talking about a district size
- 13 will change. We're not talking about a polling
- 14 location change, necessarily. But that's the general
- 15 area.
- MS. BRASWELL: So the precincts that you're going
- into 2 would be coming from?
- 18 MS. BAILEY: The precincts—those are the
- 19 precincts that were coming out of 2 to 1. The
- 20 precincts that are coming into 2 are two of the voting
- 21 precincts that vote at Bayvale Church and--will you put
- 22 up the other one, Linda, the 5-0-
- 23 MR. MASON: 504, 507, 508.
- 24 MS. BAILEY: 504 is--
- MS. MEGGERS: I'm sorry. This thing has gotten

- 1 out of--
- 2 MS. BAILEY: 507 is--it's the Minnick Park
- 3 precinct. Minnick Park is already split into two
- 4 commission districts right now today. And so what this
- 5 working plan takes part of the Minnick Park precinct
- 6 that does not go in 7 and moves it into the 2nd
- 7 District.
- 8 MS. BRASWELL: Thank you.
- 9 MR. MURPHY: Linda, what precinct number is Cherry
- 10 Tree Crossing?
- 11 MS. BAILEY: 205.
- DR. CHARLES SMITH: Yes. Previously stated, Dr.
- 13 Charles Smith, president of Augusta NAACP. 2910 Inwood
- 14 Drive, Hephzibah, Georgia. If it has not been
- 15 previously stated, and for the record again, can you
- 16 state to the public for those who may not be aware why
- 17 we had these three locations as the sites for the
- 18 redistricting hearing for Richmond County. You had one
- 19 at the Board of Education, one at Pine Hill and this
- 20 location. And, for the record we'd like to know and
- 21 some people in the public may not be aware as to the
- 22 rationale of why these three sites were chosen.
- MR. MASON: One, this area was one of the areas
- 24 that was going to have some significant change but it
- 25 also covered portions of the west end of Augusta. We

- 1 had an area downtown that covered the downtown East
- 2 Boundary area. And then we--at the Richmond County
- 3 School Board. And then we had one Monday at Pine Hill,
- 4 which covers the south side of Augusta. So we wanted
- 5 everyone--every side. We don't have a north Augusta.
- 6 It's South Carolina. So we wanted every side to have
- 7 an opportunity to come out, instead of having one big
- 8 forum and having a mass, so that we can concentrate on
- 9 those areas that are being mostly affected so that you
- 10 can ask the type of questions that you've asked here
- 11 tonight and we can get it on the record and we can
- 12 address those that we can legitimately address and
- 13 legally address. We're going to look at that. But
- 14 that was the reason for that. And, although, this is
- 15 the west end, you certainly have the right to come to
- 16 any one of--any one of the meetings and we've had some
- 17 here that have been at all three meetings. But our
- 18 purpose was to make sure that we had an opportunity to
- 19 talk to all areas and be equal in our time and our
- 20 effort to show you what redistricting is all about and
- 21 to let you understand what it is that we're trying to
- do and some of the headaches that we have when you're
- 23 trying to--and she mentioned it from the very
- 24 beginning. This is a 36 percent deviation from the
- 25 last map. That's huge. That's a huge deviation with

- 1 all these rules and regulations; you got to touch this;
- 2 you got to touch that; you got to have like
- 3 communities, you know; you got to have this polling
- 4 station; you don't want to split up this district; you
- 5 don't want to split up that neighborhood. There's a
- 6 lot of we-don't-want-to's and then we've got to figure
- 7 out how do we end up with a map with all these--we
- 8 don't--we can't do this and we can't do that. And then
- 9 what some neighborhoods want or don't want. We try to
- 10 pull all that into play and make it legal. So those
- 11 three hearings to cover the whole entire city and give
- 12 you an opportunity to have this type of open dialogue
- 13 to address the questions and concerns that you have.
- 14 Yes, ma'am.
- MS. LESTER: My name is Evelyn Lester, 4103 Elders
- 16 Drive in the Elderberry community. I know you don't
- want to split up a community, but when you have to like
- 18 the Sand Ridge and you're trying to put back together,
- 19 what adverse affects have there been to make you need
- 20 to put it or want to put it back together?
- MR. MASON: Adverse affects. Mr. Sias can speak
- 22 to that out there. I mean there's been a number of
- 23 things that people have said. Matter of fact, he can
- 24 say it better than I can. Mr. Sias, do you want to
- 25 specifically from a Sand Ridge standpoint, what type of

- 1 adverse affects that it has caused out there, which you
- 2 stated so eloquently just the other day. If you would
- 3 come up to the mic, please, that would be great. We
- 4 appreciate it.
- 5 MR. SIAS: Sammy Sias on 3839 Crest Drive. The
- 6 issues that—the issues that we brought forth for the
- 7 committee to look at has been the fact the Sand Ridge
- 8 neighborhood was split up in the last redistricting
- 9 process. And one thing that I did not tell the
- 10 committee, and I was here as an observer today, but I
- 11 will say this, Mr. Chair and Committee. One of the
- 12 things that came up to me afterwards, would you--it's
- 13 almost impossible to believe, but because our community
- 14 was split up and some other issues, from 2001 until
- 15 this day we have had to--we have twelve commissioners
- 16 to deal with. And that is an astronomical number but
- 17 it actually has happened to Sand Ridge and I can name
- 18 them all by name if I had to. And the other thing is,
- 19 when you have community events for people that are
- interested in what goes on, and you split that
- 21 particular neighborhood up, then the voters don't have
- 22 the opportunity to really talk about the issues and be
- 23 able to go to a joint process to get them done. And
- you're dealing with X number of commissioners, X number
- of school board members. And in the numbers I just

- 1 mentioned I didn't add the school board members in that
- 2 number, so we're talking about twelve commissioners,
- 3 then we can add in school board members. So it really
- 4 puts the neighborhood in a bad position to solve these
- 5 issues and to be vibrant and to move forward. Voter
- 6 disenfranchisement, apathy, and in some cases, anger.
- 7 We've had some serious issues at our voting location
- 8 when people wanted to vote and they were told it wasn't
- 9 their time. And Ms. -- there was anger issues out there.
- 10 Ms. Scott who was working out there, she mentioned that
- 11 to me as a reminder. So the bottom line in this, when
- voters feel disenfranchised or they feel that they've
- been cheated on, neighborhoods are the best way to
- 14 cause that feeling is to split up the neighborhood.
- 15 So, Mr. Chair and committee, I appreciate you giving me
- 16 this opportunity to say that. And I want to say please
- do all you can not to split up any particular direct
- 18 neighborhoods.
- MR. MASON: Thank you, Mr. Sias. District 4 which
- 20 is my district, two-thirds of Sand Ridge belongs to
- 21 District 4. One-third belongs to District 8. My
- 22 super-district commissioner for the two-thirds is Dr.
- 23 Hatney. There's two commissioners they've dealing with
- 24 right there. Now, on the other side is Wayne Guilfoyle
- 25 and his super-district commissioner is Grady Smith.

- 1 This issues on the right side when I come in that they
- 2 call me for, I'm not even the district commissioner for
- 3 that. So now they've got to go to the other guy and
- 4 try to get something done and then their neighbors and
- 5 then they're meeting as a neighborhood association
- 6 talking about issues but we've got this commissioner
- 7 and super district and this one, so there's some issues
- 8 there. We don't always elect--have our elections on
- 9 the same year so some years I'll be running and some
- 10 years the other guy will be running. Half the
- 11 neighborhood don't know and say I'm going down to vote
- 12 for you. I thought I was going down to vote for, you
- 13 know, Wayne Guilfoyle. You don't know. Those are some
- 14 issues. Things aren't just going to get--you know,
- 15 that's apathy and that sort of thing that comes in. So
- 16 that's part of the issue. We're going to look at that
- too as much as we possibly can. One thing he didn't
- 18 mention, though, that he's already mentioned to us
- 19 before. In his particular case, there's only one way
- in and one way out. Now in other neighborhoods that's
- 21 potentially split it's not necessarily like that, but
- 22 no doubt about it, you can only go in one way and you
- 23 can only come out one way. That's a true neighborhood.
- 24 That's a true neighborhood. So those are some of the
- 25 things we're going to try to look at.

- 1 Are there any other questions, concerns, issues?
- 2 Now is your time, your opportunity. Does any of the
- 3 Board members have any questions, concerns, any
- 4 statements that they want to make to the constituents
- 5 that's out here tonight?
- 6 MR. PADGETT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to
- 7 comment that Ms. Meggers and Lynn has done an
- 8 outstanding job giving us the numbers and I think when
- 9 we look at the overall process particularly once we
- 10 meet next Thursday and certainly probably will make
- 11 some adjustments that it will be a fair system that
- 12 will pass all the criteria that we need to pass in the
- 13 legislature and the Justice Department.
- 14 MR. MASON: Thank you, sir. I will reiterate on
- 15 that, this is a draft. That's all that is. Nothing
- 16 more than a draft. There's a lot of issues that have
- 17 come up and we're going to take into consideration.
- 18 You'll see a different plan based on some of those
- 19 issues. Yes, sir.
- MR. THOMAS: My name is Vinson Thomas. I live at
- 21 3313 Sugarberry Drive. And I mainly have a comment,
- 22 and I understand that this is a draft. But as a voter
- 23 in District 310 I totally disagree with what you have
- 24 here. For one, you keep mentioning that 30901 needed
- 25 voters. Now, I for one was one of those voters that

1 moved up here. And one of the reasons I moved out of 2 30901 was crime. Now, I came to this area and in 3 we 3 have a lot less crime. Now you're lumping us in with 4 District 5, which is Barton Chapel Road where there is 5 quite a bit more crime. I think, matter of fact, there 6 was a murder there in that area last night. 7 keep saying the districts are supposed to be like 8 people and you're only looking at color. But you have to look at the reason why a lot of us moved in this 9 10 area in the process. I understand what you're doing as 11 far as the Voters Registration Act, the numbers and all 12 that you're looking into, but there are other factors 13 that I think that need to be taken into consideration. 14 And that's a reason why I think a lot of people, if 15 they know what you were doing, would disagree. There's no way you can tell me, and I'm a lifelong Augustan 16 17 except for a time in the Navy, but I've been here all my life. And you can't tell me that over here on Old 18 Belair Road and Barton Chapel Road are like-minded 19 20 communities. That just ain't happening. Now, we're 21 all black predominantly in that community and we're not 22 here to look down or judge any of our own, but as you 23 have here for the reason that you've done this, I 2.4 completely disagree with it and I think that if more of 25 our community was aware of this you would have larger

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          numbers here. And I don't necessarily have a question
1
 2
          but I just wanted to put that out there.
               MR. MASON: We appreciate that. Anyone else?
 3
 4
               [No response.]
 5
               MR. MASON: All right. Ms. Meggers, anything
          else?
6
7
               MS. MEGGERS: No, sir.
               MR. MASON: Ms. Bailey?
8
9
               MS. BAILEY: No, sir.
10
               MR. MASON: Committee members?
11
               MR. PADGETT: Move to adjourn.
12
               MR. MASON: We stand adjourned.
13
               [Public hearing adjourns at 7:48 p.m.]
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	Page 71				
1	CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER				
2	I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript				
3	consisting of pages numbered 1 through 71 is a true and				
4	correct transcript of the proceeding held before me; that				
5	said hearing was reported by the method of Stenomask.				
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7	the parties in the case, am not in the regular employ of				
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